Easter Issue

the magazine of the religion of the Goddess

The COMING AGE

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A Hymn for Passion-Tide

Our Lady has put on Her veil
To tread a darksome path.
Her fair form waxeth cold and pale
Beneath Irkalla's wrath.

She entered in that region drear:
"Who comes?" the demons cry.
She answered: "Thou hast naught to fear,
For it is none but I."

"Your precious love, Your radiant light,
Fill us with hellish dread,
We dare not stand within their sight."
"I give them up" She said.

Our Mistress, She has gone away
Into the land of pain.
Her laughter, like the sun's bright ray,
When shall it ring again?

She was our Sun in times before,
The light of our small sky;
And now the birds will sing no more,
The rivers all run dry.

And all that's fair on earth or sea
Is withered out of form.
Without our Mistress, what are we
But leaves upon the storm?

And all that's sweet upon the earth
Is turned to bitter gall
For want of She that loved us so,
She died to save us all.

Yet I believe the day shall come,
The clarion shall sound,
A host of angels beat the drum
And thunder break the ground,

And She Who made the earth and Heaven
Shall walk on earth again;
And Hell's foundations shall be riven,
And Hell's gates brake in twain.

And all the flowers shall come to birth
Unfurled like victor's banners;
And our Princess shall come on earth
Amid our high hosannas.

The Year of Metis

In the Madrian calendar, every month within a given year begins on the same day of the week; and the Genia who rules this day rules also the year in question. Each week day is governed by one of the seven great "planetary" Geniae who rule the seven virtues. This year's months began on Tuesday (Mars), so it is the Year of Niké, and her virtue of courage. In the new year they will begin on Wednesday (Mercury), making it the Year of Metis and her virtue of wisdom. Everything on earth and in the heavens can be attributed to one of the "planetary" principles. The negative or maleficent things are governed by the seven daughters of Irkalla who represent the extreme perversions of the principles, and who guarded the seven gates of Hell through which our Lady passed (a list of the Geniae, their days, planets & virtues is in the Calendar).

The Power of Imagination

OF ALL the powers latent in humanity, the power of imagination is perhaps the greatest. Under hypnosis, where the imagination is brought under control, the most remarkable phenomena can be produced. A subject told that she has been beaten with a stick will instantly not only feel the pain, but will manifest a real physical bruise. The body can be made to form a rigid line, and with only feet and neck resting on two chairs can support the weight of an adult standing on the stomach. The trained imagination of a sorceress can produce effects beyond the limits of her own body, conjuring visible images and affecting material objects. The imagination of an Amazon archer or swordsmaid who had learned the inner secret of her art gave her abilities far beyond her physical speed and strength — indeed beyond the merely physical capabilities of any human being.

There is great misunderstanding about what imagination really is. The false modern doctrine which sees the world as something existing in its own right, apart from any higher reality and maid as a solitary animal, her whole being and consciousness locked up within the confines of her skull, can only see imagination as the subjective fantasies of the human brain. But when we know that all the objects and phenomena of the physical world are but the expression on the physical plane of spiritual Realities; the manifestation of possibilities contained within the Non-Manifest; the crystallisation in matter of images within the mind of God (quite literally, Her imag-ination), then it seems not so strange that imagination should have power over physical matter.

When we have learned that just as there is but one Intellect — the Divine Intellect — so there is but one imagination, and that our "individual" imaginations are but the rays of that one Sun; or like Her many images mirrored in lake and pond and puddle; when we have learned that neither we nor the physical world have any reality of our own, but like any looking-glass image are wholly dependent for our existence upon the image which we reflect; then we have learned something of the true nature of imagination.

"We (and the whole world with us) are such stuff as dreams are made on". Within an apple-seed lies the dream of a full-grown tree, shaping the matter drawn from earth and sun and water until it is a substantial image of the dream. The tree — affected by a hard winter or a dry summer, a spot too shady or not shady enough, a soil that is less than perfect — is not a perfect image of the dream. Yet the dream itself is but the imperfect image of another, higher dream: the archetypal apple-tree, the Tree of Life that blossoms at the centre of Avala. For this is the primordial and ultimate paradigm of every apple tree.

Imperfection and suffering are woven into the very fabric of the world; not because the Divine Ideas or Images are imperfect, but because here they are reflected in imperfect matter. If the surface of the water is disturbed, the perfect circle of the sun is broken. Imagination works in every tree and rock and flower, but only in maid is imagination reflected. Only maid "has" an imagination, for she is the central being in this world; the mediatrix between matter and Spirit, between earth and Heaven; the priestess of the world, re-

flecting She Who is the primordial and ultimate Priestess of the World; the regent who rules the world in the name of the divine Princess. Maid (as her name tells us) is the creature endowed with the faculty of choice. She has the power to uphold true imagination within her microcosmic world or to pervert it. If this world slips ever further from perfection, it is firstly through the aberration of maid from her true nature – the treason of the princess regent – that this takes place.

Maid it is who has given "a name to every thing and creature, each in the order that She had shaped them." (*Creation.* I,11). Her act of naming imitates the divine Act of creation. Bearing in mind the magical power of names, it may be seen that maid supports and re-enacts the cosmic Act of creation. The "play" of her imagination is literally a "re-creation". Those who understand the metaphysical significance of words will realise that this is something far more than an accidental pun.

The sacred ritual drama, or "play", is the origin of all theatre, and also of all poetry and other literature. When the play ceases to re-create, to reflect the cosmic process; when the play's hera ceases to be a type of the questing soul, or of the archetypal Hera Herself, and the drama turns to merely "accidental" episodes and individuals, then the thread of true imagination is broken. A tree, or any earthly thing, is, as we have seen, an imperfect image of an imperfect image. It is the function of true imagination to return to the source, to create an image of the Real, to mediate between ultimate Reality and the shifting shadows of the world of matter. When literature, or any art, seeks merely to imitate physical things or events, it becomes not an image of the Real, but a copy of a copy of a copy. And this the ignorant call "realism"!

In Madrian civilisations, attuned to the harmony of themis, not only art, but every kind of "play" was a re-creation. What are now regarded as secular sports and performances were then rites performed by initiates on some particular path. Proficiency (cunning) was not merely a physical skill, but an inner wisdom. precisely that "cunning" exercised by God in Her Act of creation and by maid in her naming of the creatures (*Creation.* I,5 and 11); in other words, the divine Imagination and its microcosmic human reflection. It is this power which wrought the super-human feats of the bull-leapers of matriarchal Crete or the legendary Amazon "Silver Guard". The more sedentary games, such as chess, also had a profound ritual and symbolic meaning*. Likewise, agriculture, the crafts and all the important acts of life took on the character not only of merely utilitarian activities, but also of effective ritual drama.

Maid: the Princess Regent

One of the consequences of the original Fall of maid from God was the separation of human imagination from its divine Source. Since then, every further fall (for we have continued downwards) has increased that separation, darkening and perverting the human imagination as it drifts further from its true Light. The crucial step towards final chaos took place with the very distortion of the divine Image, in which God Herself became conceived as male. At the same time, the human self-image became perverted, and maid began to conceive of herself as "man". To those brought up with the "symbolic illiteracy" inculcated by modern education – a total ignorance of symbols and their power – this change may seem insignificant enough; but to those who understand a little of the science of symbolism it will be no surprise that this perversion paved the way for a whole host of others – and indeed that this perversion is indirectly responsible for the very symbolic illiteracy which prevents people from seeing it. For once true images are perverted, it is no longer possible to

* A paper on the inner meaning of chess is available through the Literature Circle.

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CALENDARS: The new Madrian year begins at Easter, and the new calendar will be available soon, giving all Major and many Minor Festivals, natural rites, a table of correspondences for every day of the sacred and secular year, and various other information. Delightfully illustrated. 50p plus 10p postage and packing. Please order now for delivery by New Year.

MADRIAN JEWELLERY: the following items are now available from Lux Madriana: Moon-Axe pendant, $1\frac{3}{4}$" high with stone haft and Celtic-pattern blades, on chain, £1·70p. Resurrection Cross ring with violet or blue centre-stone, adjustable size, £1·00. Resurrection Cross pendant with five violet stones, on chain, £1·45p. Please add 15p carriage on any order.

RADIO: Sister Angelina gave a second interview to Radio Oxford in Brighde. An interview was also published in the *Oxford Journal*.

ROSARIES: Madrian Rosaries are available at £1·50 post free.

CONFERENCE: Sister Angelina will be one of the speakers at a conference entitled "The Re-Emergence of the Goddess", to be held on the 4th Maia from 11am - 7pm at the Central Library, Phillimore Walk, Kensington, London. It will be opened by the writer Geoffrey Ashe and tickets at £2·50 each are available from Maureen Ballard, 9 Chestnut Way, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1TN.

SILVER TEMPLE OF THE MOON: an astral-etheric Temple in the subtle realms to which any soul can attune for devotion, healing or spiritual comfort. Send two stamps for a leaflet giving details of the Temple and how to attune.

GATHERINGS: Small gatherings of new Madrians are held in Oxford on or near most major festivals. These give new people a chance to attend the Rite and to become a part of the catholic Madrian community. If you are seriously interested and would like to attend a gathering, please write to Chrysothemis at Lux Madriana.

DONATIONS: Thank you all for the financial support you have given us over the past quarter — without you we could not have managed. Thank you also for your prayers.

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distinguish the true from the false — the archetypal cosmic imagination from mere individual fancyings. Human imagination disports itself among the shadows of the physical world, no longer seeking the Light by which they are thrown. Lyric and epic are replaced by the novel. The princess regent sees herself merely as a clever animal called "man", and the world as a lump of verdant rock created by some physical accident.

The ancients believed that if the timeless rites of re-creation were discontinued the world would lose all stability and finally be destroyed. Modern thought, seeing only the outward part of things, dismisses this as nonsense. Yet already we see the fabric of society beginning to crack and crumble; the environment undermined by a technology which lacks all grasp of anything beyond the physical; a stream of nightmarish weapons of destruction — poured forth by a human imagination perverted from its divine Source and turned diabolical — which threaten at any moment to carry out the prophecy of the world's destruction.

There can be no solution on the physical plane to problems which have their roots in the spiritual. We can only correct the balance if we turn again to the true image of God and of maid; and if we turn our imaginations from rooting in the earth like pigs — taking the perverted imaginings of advertisers and political image-makers for "hard reality" — and raise our heads to heaven, that the light of true Reality may penetrate the whole of our being; that our lives may attune to the harmony of themis; our work, our play and our relationships all taking on the character of a sacred drama, moulding our lives to the pattern of the Divine dream that is the primordial and ultimate paradigm of all human life.

Sister Angelina.

The Darkest Hour

The World in the Latter Days

WE ARE rapidly approaching the end of the age. On every side, the spiritual roots of human society are falling into decay. The last threads which link the shadow-world of physical matter to the ultimate Reality which lies behind it are being snapped. Even the rhythms of nature which constitute a ritual which continues without human cooperation, and her virgin majesty which is a temple not made with hands, are being crowded out by the ugly artificial environment created by technological materialism and the unnatural and inhuman machine-rhythms imposed on us by the reign of ironmongery.

Until even a few hundred years ago, the idea of life and work as separate from something called "religion" would have been incomprehensible. Agriculture and the crafts were ritual activities not only producing food or artefacts, but also nourishing the inner maid and forming a vital part of her life's journey — the journey from birth to death, whose every step brought her nearer to God. Once the separation had been made, the flood-gates were opened to every kind of deviation. The initiatory path of craft degenerated into the coolie-labour of the factories, and agriculture is disrupted by the obscenities of factory farming and the battery system.

Nobody is in control of this process; it trundles forward under its own increasing momentum, crushing all that lies in its path. Quite apart from the terrifying multiplication of destructive weapons and the ecological disaster which will looms over us as a virtual inevitability (the world has been likened to a stranded ship rapidly running out of food and supplies), the process results in shoddier goods, uglier surroundings, more tasteless and less nourishing food, while work, for the majority of people is reduced from a true vocation to a mere chore. The question of whether anybody likes it, wants it or benefits from it is never asked; everyone from the highest to the lowest stands mesmerised by the myth of progress like a rabbit mesmerised by a serpent. "You can't stand in the way of progress", they cry; whatever the cost in terms of human dignity, the environment, or even our very survival. The Process has taken over. The machine has become dictator. Humanity is merely its servant.

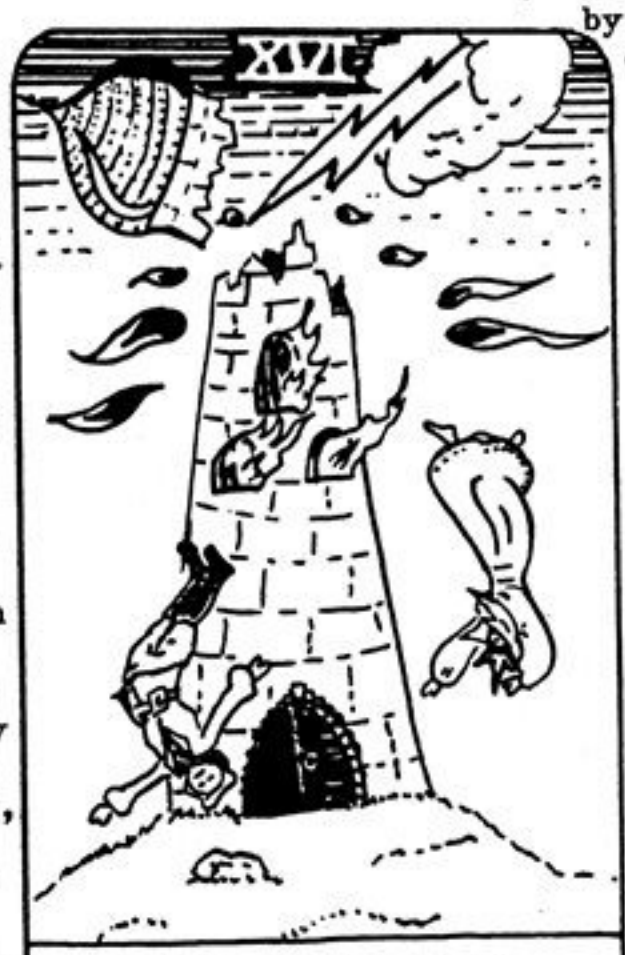
There is a rather callow type of pseudo-evolutionism which attributes this cult of constant change to humanity's "growing up" or "coming of age". In fact such accelerated metamorphosis is a sure sign of decay. The human body, which takes some twenty years to come to maturity, decomposes in a fraction of that time.

Wherever some vestige of spiritual and metaphysical Truth, however degenerate, survived as the cardinal directing principle of life and work — whether in tribal Africa or India, in Tibet or among the North American Indians — it has been systematically destroyed over the last century, either by physical brutality (as in the last two cases) or by methods more subtle but no less deadly. All over the world the understanding of the world in terms of the metaphysical realities which underlie it has been replaced by a shallow materialistic mythology based on outdated mechanistic physics and paperback Darwinism, served up by the media and the "education" system as the apogee of human knowledge.

But even the triumph of materialism is not the end of the story. For over 300 years the western world has been sealing itself off from everything above the physical level and spreading this spiritual darkness over the entire globe. But already the point of total materialism has been passed. For materialism was only one stage in a process far deeper and more sinister than the simple-minded materialists, who have acted as its unwitting agents, can possibly suspect. The process by which the age of Irkalla (Kali-

Yuga or the Age of Iron – the last phase of the historical cycle) comes to its logical conclusion, and all the darkest and most inferior possibilities of the cycle rise to the surface. The physical world is now effectively cut off from all authentically spiritual influences – sealed off from above – but now the second phase of the process is beginning. Cracks are appearing in the hard crust of matter, and the influences which are now seeping in are not supernatural, but sub-natural.

On every level one can see this reflected. At the Renaissance, art changed from a stylised sacred art to a naturalism which attempted to capture not spiritual Reality but physical "realism". Now realism has given way to "surrealism" of various sorts, representing neither the Spiritual nor the physical, but the chaotic domain of inferior psychism – it is an inverted parody of sacred art: diabolic art. Psychology originally meant "the study of the soul". By the 19th century it had given up all pretence at belief in the soul and had become purely the study of mental consciousness; yet before the end of that century, it had plunged into the murky depths of what its practitioners aptly termed the sub-conscious. Again, an inverted parody of true psychology. Even in physics, once the stronghold of materialism, the old certainties are breaking down. Ninteenth century mechanistic materialism – although it still provides the "scientific world-view" of the average person – can no longer be held by any serious scientist. But the influences which are breaking through have nothing to do with the Spirit. They are the forces of pure chaos and disorder.



Certain vaguely "spiritual" people are applauding the breakdown of materialism. They are dangerously deluded. Cut off from Spiritual principles, the world has not the least defence against the forces of darkness. It would be far wiser to huddle in the relative safety of materialism.

To rejoice because Russian scientists have (re)discovered certain psychic powers is worse than short-sighted. Imagine the horror of a tyranny which can read the very minds of its victims. And is it a coincidence that this research is being so avidly pursued in Russia of all places? It is frightening enough that such powers should lie in the hands of tyrants and madmen; but with the world lacking all direction, driven at ever-increasing speed by blind forces it does not understand, beckoned on by the grinning skeleton of "progress", one is compelled to ask: "In the hands of whom do the tyrants and madmen lie?" Or rather, in the hands of *what?*

The question needs no answer, for this is the Age of Irkalla, and the world is necessarily in the hands of the forces of darkness. The decay which began when the first male god was worshipped is coming to its inevitable conclusion. If materialism was a dead, neutral darkness, the inferior psychism which is beginning to invade the earth is a living darkness. Increasingly, these powers are using ignorant human beings – now totally sealed off from the Light – to open "fissures" through which they may enter. Wherever people dabble in psychic or pseudo-spiritual activities while lacking any genuine knowledge of metaphysical principles, these forces will enter. This explains the occult revival, the growth of "women's spirituality", many "new age" groups, etc. The sincere sentimentalism of these groups – lacking any transcendant Principle and indistinguishable from materialistic "humanism" – is of no help, for the essential danger lie in the lack of First Principles. We hear not the clarion of a New Age, but the death-rattle of the old. And behind the noise and clangour of the modern world, we hear Irkalla's death's-head laugh.

contd. over

Easter

THE MEANING of Easter is the redemption of the world. It is by this most sorrowful and most joyful of all events that all fallen creation is sustained, and our return to the Goddess is made possible. It is an Event of such magnitude that although patriarchal religions managed to suppress the worship of the Goddess, they had to include Easter in their manufactured set of beliefs; for the knowledge of it is too deeply ingrained to be forgotten or suppressed. For our very existence is dependent on this Act of mercy and love; and deep within her heart, every soul knows this.

As the old year draws to a close, with the month of Moura, in the season of Spirit, we contemplate the suffering of our Lady. She Who is perfect innocence descended into the lowest pit of Hell. She who is pure and gentle, without the smallest stain upon the radiance of Her soul, descended into the uttermost depths of depravity and filth. She whose thoughts are all of beauty and tender kindness, who is filled with love and compassion for every creature, even to the last blade of grass, gave Herself into the hands of cruelty and hatred to be tortured and mocked and reviled.

She was a maid — a soul like us — it is so easy to avoid the truth by forgetting this, by pretending that it must somehow have been easier for Her because She was perfect. She was cut off from the perfection of Her Mother, subject to all the temptations which we feel. She was perfect through sheer heroic effort. She controlled Her thoughts and Her actions; She did not allow Herself one thought of anger or impurity or self-pity. Though She could not see Her Mother, yet She obeyed Her in every smallest thing. She did nothing because She wanted to do it, but only because Her Mother willed it. She was tempted as we are tempted; She was offered wealth and magnificence and "all good things" by the powers of darkness, but She chose the path of unthinkable suffering. Her perfection did not make it easy for Her. We are told in one place that She "was filled with trembling", and in another that Her "heart fainted within Her". How She must have been tempted to hate Her tormentors, but She always had compassion for every creature. How She must have been tempted to rebel against Her Mother and not to take the dreadful path which lay before Her. Yet when the keres mockingly ask Her if She thinks that Her Mother will save Her, She replies, knowing well that She will not: "She will do what She will do, and blessed is Her name." (*Mythos* IV,18).

She journeyed through the seven great gates of Hell which are the perversions of the seven Virtues. She who had built up the Virtues within Herself with such heroic and self-sacrificing love was now made to experience their hideous anti-selves, distorted by the hand of evil into hellish parodies of all that is true, beautiful and wholesome. Already She had given up Her divinity, now, as She journeyed deeper and deeper into that foul land, She had to make Herself more and more vulnerable in order that the powers of darkness might take Her. Had She not stripped Herself voluntarily of Her perfections at each gate, even then not the mightiest of the demons would have dared to come near Her. She gave Herself defenceless into the hands of Hell, meekly,

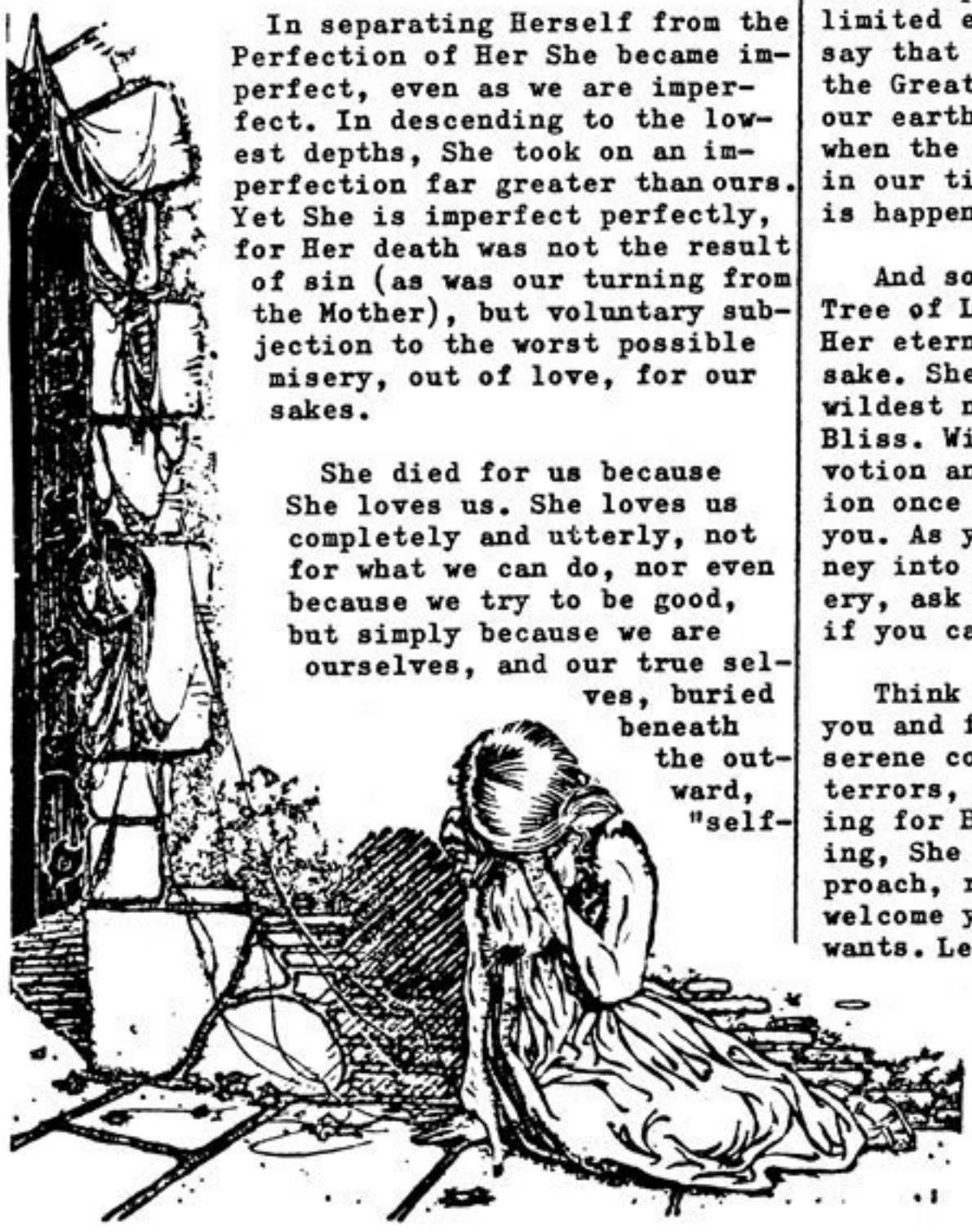
The Darkest Hour

Yet after the death comes the resurrection. After the Iron Age, the Age of Gold returns. And already, the primordial Spirituality, our Lady's faith, begins to spread once more upon the earth. We cannot call it the dawn of a New Age, for things will get worse before they can get better; but it is at least the seed of the Coming Age.

Sister Alethea

of Her own free will, knowing what they would do unto Her, knowing that she would suffer more than any creature has ever suffered.

The Passion of our Lady is an inconceivable act of generosity in the true sense of the word. For She poured Her Spirit out of Herself in order that we might return to Her. She journeyed down into the outermost darkness, further than any soul could possibly fall — to a place where even Irkalla, the embodiment of evil, herself could not go. Her soul cried out in its distress, yet came no comfort or answer, only the mocking echo of the keres' laughter. She knelt in the darkness to weep, yet no hand was raised to give Her comfort.



In separating Herself from the Perfection of Her She became imperfect, even as we are imperfect. In descending to the lowest depths, She took on an imperfection far greater than ours. Yet She is imperfect perfectly, for Her death was not the result of sin (as was our turning from the Mother), but voluntary subjection to the worst possible misery, out of love, for our sakes.

She died for us because She loves us. She loves us completely and utterly, not for what we can do, nor even because we try to be good, but simply because we are ourselves, and our true selves, buried beneath the outward, "selfish" ego, which has turned away from our Mother, are perfect; and when we return to Her, we will again become our true selves. By Her suffering, She has shattered the gates of Hell. The only being to know damnation is God Herself. No soul can ever now be lost, and in the fulness of time, every soul shall realise the full horror of evil and turn again to the Good. And when a soul does that, however low she has fallen — even if she has descended to a rebirth in the demonic realms, far below our material world, our Lady will be there to guide her, for She has journeyed even to the lowest regions. That is why Her death did not take place on this earth. It took place beyond space, and yet it is taking place at all places. It took place beyond time also. From our limited earthly standpoint, we can only say that it takes place in the Easter of the Great Year, the eternal Year of which our earthly years are but reflections. So, when the season of the Passion approaches in our time, it is correct to say that it is happening now.

And so the Maid hangs lifeless on the Tree of Life. God is dead. She has given up Her eternal life for love of you, for your sake. She endures suffering beyond your wildest nightmare, that you might return to Bliss. Will you not repay Her with your devotion and love, striving towards perfection once more? For this is what She asks of you. As you contemplate her dreadful journey into the land of eternal night and misery, ask yourself if you can refuse Her; if you can reject the Good again.

Think upon Her boundless compassion for you and for all creatures. Think of her serene courage in the face of nameless terrors, and of Her Mother and ours, weeping for Her Daughter. Despite Her suffering, She greets you smiling, without reproach, ready to forgive all your sins and welcome you home again. That is all She wants. Let us cast aside our pride and our self-assertion and all the illusions of the profane world, and follow Her in true obedience. Let our hard, cold, egotistical false selves be slain with Her upon the Pillar, and our resplendent true selves rise in the glorious resurrection.

Phoebe

WHO IS OUR LADY ?

Or Rather: Who Are We ?

WHO IS IT that I talk to in my prayers? She is the ultimate Truth behind all things, the absolute Principle from which all existence flows, yet She is presented to us as a Person almost like ourselves. She was not incarnate on this earth, yet we are told that She was born and lived and died.

Many people new to Madrianism find it possible to conceive of God as an abstract force but not as a person. This old heresy (many people suppose it to be new, but it has been going since Victorian times. Bernard Shaw's "Great Life Force" was all the rage in the Edwardian era) has its roots in the mechanistic scientism of the last century. Physical science is full of forces, like magnetism and electricity, so it makes God sound nice and scientific. Of course, it is still a metaphor, just as much as calling Her a Person. Only it is a purely physical metaphor. A force can be physically great, but never morally or spiritually great. It is a typically patriarchal perspective — greatness equals physical greatness; muscle. It is the logical extension of the male-god image.

Nevertheless, it *can* be difficult to understand how the primal Principle can be a maid to Whom we can relate and Who has undergone certain experiences. The difficulty lies in a misconception not so much of the nature of God as of the nature of maid. Modern children are indoctrinated from the earliest age to think of maid as an animal which has risen above other animals by an accident of "evolution". They are taught also to think of all the things and creatures around them in the same way, as mere accidents of the physical plane, whose nature is to be sought in merely physical (or "scientific") explanations. Such explanations may be adequate on their own level — just as the writing of a great poem might be described wholly in terms of the movements of the poet's finger-muscles. But in both cases, the physical explanation not only does not explain the whole process, but it leaves out all that is most profound and significant. Such explanations may have their uses, but as soon as they start pretending to be the "whole truth" about the poem, or about the universe, or about maid, they stop being science and start being scientism. In other words, they stop being a relative truth and become an absolute error. It is this scientism with which the modern maid has been indoctrinated from her earliest years, and it is the false, materialistic world-view which it inculcates which stands between her and the understanding of maid and of God.

Viewed from beyond the merely physical perspective, the whole cosmos is a reflection of God. Each object and phenomenon within the cosmos reflects some facet of the Divine (a "Divine Idea"), while maid, the microcosm (little cosmos) forms a complete reflection in herself. That is because she is the central being on this plane of existence. She alone of all this world's creatures has the power to choose the way of Themis — to act according to the divine Harmony of her own free will. A flower, a dog, a star or a nature-spirit develops and acts according to its natural laws without choice. The word "maid" has the same root as "may": to be able or to have the power to do something (thus "might" both means "power" and is the past tense of may). It is essentially the potential to act or not to act. Thus maid is literally "she-with-potential" (potency), or "she-with-choice". It is also cognate with "mag" (as in magnify, magnificent), meaning "great" — indicating her centrality, her "governance over all the earth". She also has intellect: the power to participate in the Divine Intelligence, and thus to know the inner meaning of the cosmos. This is not to be confused with reason, which is merely the power to draw conclusions from observed phenomena and is possessed, at least in a rudimentary degree, by animals, plants and protozoae. It should be noted that the term "man" (from the same root as "mental") refers to this lower rational faculty; and it is no accident that a society symbolically attuned to the male principle should adopt a rationalism and scientism directed solely to the "observed phenomena" of the physical world. Nor that it adopts an "evolutionist" ideology which can see no *essential* difference between human and animal creation.

And it is this which prevents us from understanding the Image of God. So long as we see maid as a mere biological accident, it seems preposterous that God should resemble her. But the truth is that it is not God Who

is maid-like (anthropomorphic) but maid who is God-like (Theamorphic). For maid is the "reflection" of God in every sense (cf. *Creation* I,10). It is not primarily her body but her inner being that reflects God yet the body too has its symbolic significance for those who have the wisdom (or Intelligence) to read it.

It is not implied that men are excluded from this Theamorphism, for the term "maid" embraces all humanity – but a humanity attuned to the feminine principle. For a maid, both spiritually and biologically, represents the archetypal human being. For this reason, all symbolic and hieratic functions, such as priesthood or the headship of households, are exercised by maids.

But what of the acts, the "history" of our Lady; Her birth; Her life; Her death and Her resurrection? At all times, the story of the slain and resurrected Saviour has been told. In patriarchal times, She was conceived in a male form as Osiris, Attis, Adonis and many other names. That the last of these, Christ, should be said to have been a real historical person incarnate on earth is a natural consequence of the increasing materialism or scientism of the male principle. More and more, everything, even religion, must be brought down to the plane of matter – the logical end of this is modern atheism. But long before these male "saviours", we have the slain and resurrected Daughter, known as Persephone, Ishtar, the Hanged Artemis, Helen of the Trees, Kuan Yin, and a hundred other names.

Behind all these names and myths lies a Mystery of unfathomable depth: the cardinal Mystery of the cosmos. Maid is divine in form, but she is not divine in essence. This is because she has used her power of choice to move away from God – to be in that-place-where-God-is-not. Cut off from the Source of all Good and happiness, we must plunge into a world of evil and suffering. If God was to come to us in that-place-where-She-is-not, She must sever Herself from Herself – She must cease to be pure Spirit and become a soul; a maid (that is to say, not necessarily a human on this plane, but a soul endowed with choice and intellect, but separate from God). Thus God gave birth and became Her own Daughter. If we cannot understand the "life" of God as maid, it is no wonder, for Her Self-separation is the ultimate paradox; the supreme Mystery of the universe. Scientism knows no Mysteries, only mundane facts. A fact is something you either know or don't know. A Mystery is a thing a little child can know; yet only a lifetime of loving contemplation can take her into the heart of it. This much we can say: that our Lady was a maid as we are; that She felt as we feel, and suffered as we will never suffer, because by Her own choice She went to the uttermost depth of suffering, that no part of creation – not even Irkalla herself – should finally be lost

Maid: the Microcosm

We turned from God in sin, but She turned from Her in the most perfect virtue of Self-sacrifice. And since maid is the reflection of God, She, being perfect maid, is the perfect reflection of God. Thus, even as maid, She is still Divine (this is what is meant by "the light of Her own divinity" in *Mythos* V,18).

The deepest pit of Hell is the furthest place from God, and thus the place of greatest suffering. And yet She journeyed there in innocence and purest virtue. Thus, the further She moved from God, the more Godlike She became, until through Her final agony and extinction, She returned to the quintessence of life. Only one Teacher can lead you into the heart of this Mystery, and She, through Her sacrifice, is with you now.

Sister Julia

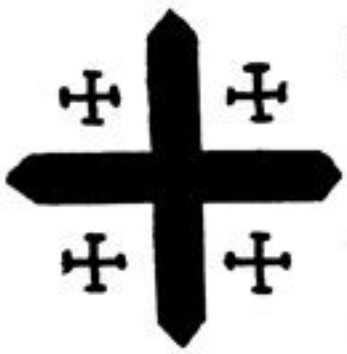
THE COMING
festival meaning

Correspondence of the sacred and secular dates for the seasons of Moura and Spring, years 120 and 121:

120: Moura: February 19 — March 19

— Hiatus: March 20

121: Columbina: March 21 — April 17
Maia: April 18 — May 15
Hera: May 16 — June 12



Major Festivals

EASTER: Passion (Moura 28th), Hiatus (-), Resurrection (Columbina 1st). Spring Equinox (March 19-21).

LADY DAY (The Day of Our Sovereign Lady): Columbina 5th (March 25th).

EXALTATION (The Exaltation of the Queen of Heaven): Maia 4th (May 1).

Minor Festivals

ROSARY DAY: Maia 1st (April 18th).

ANTHEA'S DAY: Hera 10th (May 25th).

THE NEW YEAR

Moura is a season of fast and purification in preparation for Spring and the Great Festival of Easter. It is literally a mortification — a "making dead" — of those elements within us which are unworthy of the new birth; a ritual expulsion of our darkest tendencies. Thus it is that we make ourselves ready for the new year.

In the traditional cyclical view of time, there is no succession of different years, but one year constantly reborn. The cosmic year is eternal and unchanging; on earth we experience only a succession of echoes. In ritual terms, everything is renewed at the new year — the earth is created again, the soul returns to her original purity, all things recover the perfection of their first creation. This is the reason why Easter is the ideal time for initiation, the death and rebirth of the human soul.

The central event of the season is the suffering, death and rebirth of Inanna, God the Daughter, by which the very existence of this earthly life has been made possible. This is the meaning of the festival of Easter, named after the Northern Goddess of dawn and spring, which name in turn derives from Ishtar, one of the names of Inanna in late matriarchal Babylon.

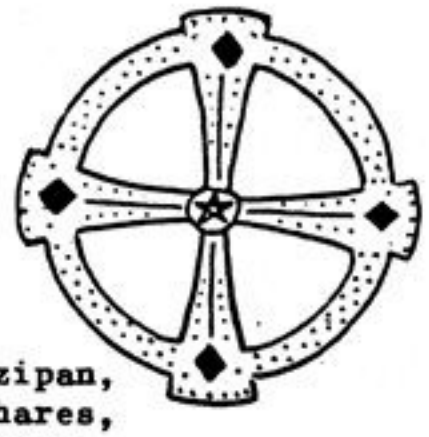
Easter

THE PASSION: The day of our Lady's suffering and death, marked by solemnity in ritual, meditation and prayer. It is the last day of the old year; ritually, the end of time.

Symbols of the Passion include the equiarmed cross (see "The Cross" from TCA2, now in the Literature Circle) and the willow (see "Symbolism", TCA6) Hot spiced cakes or buns marked with the equiarmed cross are traditionally associated with this day; the sacred custom of eating cakes marked with a cross was held among Greeks, Romans, Saxons and others, and was especially connected with the worship of Diana-Artemis.

HIATUS: A day out of time, neither of the old year nor the new. Everything is ritually dead or non-existent as our Lady hangs lifeless on the pillar of the world. The Mother of All things walks in sorrow over earth and Heaven, weeping for Her Daughter.

S SEASON
s & celebration



We limit our activity to a minimum, maintain fast and keep periods of silence. Some communities and initiands keep vigil until dawn. Altars and shrines are draped in black, and bear no ornament except for sprigs of yew, the tree of death. It is held that any work begun on the Hiatus is bound to fail.

RESURRECTION: A day of joy, for Inanna is reborn and united with Her Mother. Homes and shrines are decorated with with the new growth of spring, flowers and greenery; altars are decked in the seasonal colours of white and gold, with candles, lilies, daffodils and yew (this last a reminder of the death from which the rebirth came). The Rite of the day properly takes place at dawn, in the first hour of the first day of the year. This should at least be a period for prayer, meditation and reading of the

"And the Mother of All Things walked in sorrow over earth and Heaven" (Mythos.*VI.6*)

The central symbol is the Resurrection Cross ⊕ recalling the diffusion of Spirit throughout creation by the Divine Sacrifice. The egg, the dove and the hare are ancient Easter symbols — the egg self-evidently represents life and resurrection; the leaping of the sacred hare is held to celebrate its mistress's return; the dove is the reborn and glorious Dove of the Sacrifice.

Easter food includes dyed and painted hard-boiled eggs, marzipan, chocolate and jelly eggs and hares, custard tarts and Easter biscuits. Dancing and games of egg-rolling, tossing and juggling are typical of the celebrations.

Lady Day

A celebration of our Lady's return to sovereignty over the earth after Her descent into the Nether World. Praise is the essence of the festival, and the daffodil, whose trumpet symbolises praise, is its flower.

On this day we also celebrate the re-creation of the world after its fall into chaos. We are aware of all earthly things as shadows of perfect Realities in the world of Eternity, and ask our Lady's blessing on them all. The ritual planting of seven seeds in a vessel, symbolic of regeneration, is also traditional.

Exaltation

The festival of our Lady as queen of Heaven, celebrating Her return to full Divinity and Her crowning by the children of Heaven. This is also the feast of the institution of Communion, the Sacrament by which we are made one with our Lady, symbolised by the grail or chalice. Homes are by custom decorated with flowers and blossom in all types of arrangement, including hanging garlands. Ginger cake is a traditional festival food.

The VALLEY of the WELL

THEY DREW REIN in the heart of the Barren Mountains, and the princess Adrasteia spoke to Maira her companion, saying: "Yonder lies my road and my destiny, but it is not yours. Stay here then and await my return for three days and three nights, and if I have still not returned, ride and bid my people accept another in my stead."

"My lady, I beseech you" answered Maira in distress "your lightest word would I obey, though it placed my life in direst peril. Yet when you seek to save my life, my heart protests and is unwilling. Grant that I may accompany you yet further, for we can only go to darkness and to death; and should you go alone and not return, my world would henceforth be a little darkness, my very life itself akin to death."

The princess looked upon the young maid her companion and there was love between them and understanding. "It is not from death I seek to shield you, my child, but from pain, which can be worse. But if you will brave sorrow and come with me, I lay two charges on you. Whatever is said or done, speak no word of anger; and do not ever draw your bow, but place your reliance in the protections of the spirit. For if you obey me not in this, your words and arrows will be used as weapons against me."

Maira pledged her word, and they rode in love and comradeship into the Valley of the Well. The desolation of the place struck them anew, for although in all these mountains, this place of the well should have been the gentlest and greenest, there were unearthly shadows in its hollows, and the echo of horses' hooves around it was like unholy laughter. In all that valley not a blade of grass grew, but over the well itself stretched a dead and crooked tree.

Princess Adrasteia pulled the hood of her cloak over her face and sent Maira ahead, saying: "Go, ask the maiden of the well for water. Say not who we are, but say only that we are travellers."

As Maira approached she perceived the figure of a maid crouching over the well. She halted and addressed her: "Maiden, I seek water for myself and my companion, for we have been long upon the road. Will you draw for us?"

The maid looked up as she spoke, and Maira was shocked to see an ancient, wrinkled and loathsome countenance, for legend said that the well was tended by a beautiful damsel.

"Draw it for yourself." Her voice was thin and spiteful. "Do you seek to make me your slave?"

Now legend recounted that water drawn not by the maiden of the well was a deadly poison, and Maira was filled with anger at this attempt to deceive the unwary traveller. But she recalled her princess's command and spoke mildly: "Maiden of the well, you know why that is impossible. It is your destiny and your duty to tend the well and to serve the traveller. Draw us some water."

The maid, discomfited, gave Maira a look of pure hatred, but took her pitcher to the well. "Here is your water" she said, holding it out. But as Maira stretched her hand to take it, she poured it over the rocks, and, laughing with wicked glee, took up her former position.

"Hag!" Maira cried with passion. "What is this that you do? Are you a minion of the Queen of Darkness that you serve us so who have offered you no harm?" Even as she spoke, she regretted her anger, but she could not take back her words.

"I may or may not be so," crowed the maid, "but you will curse yourself for speaking thus to me, for you have given me strength." As she rose to her feet, the valley grew colder and more threatening, and Maira was transfixed by fear.

The hag stretched her hands above her head and chanted: "Come rat, come snake, come toad, come creeping thing. Come bat, come raven, vulture spread your wing. Come Karn, come Foll, come Hed, I call you in! Come Jank, come Mart, come Kal, come in, come in!" The air was thickening; the summons went on and on, ringing round the valley, bringing down the dark. Maira heard a step, and turning blindly, saw Adrasteia beside her. They joined hands. Strange coloured lights flickered around them. There were sounds like the whisperings of many hidden voices and the hiss of cold flame. The chanting grew louder: "Come Tremis, come Rider, come Eldroth, come Maalite, come Jerbon, come in, I call you..."

Adrasteia pulled back her hood and the voice faltered. The hag looked at the princess, shrinking back. A sudden stillness fell upon the valley, as though all were watching and waiting. Adrasteia stepped forward and stretched out her hands. "Melissa," she said softly, "Beloved, it is not too late. Come home."

The hag answered in a whimper: "No."

"Melissa," Adrasteia's voice was as gentle as the touch of dawn's fingers, "There is still time. Believe me. Trust me. Turn. Take my hand, Melissa." The reply barely broke the silence: "No." "Beloved Melissa, try to remember the love there has been between us. I love you still. Come back to me."

Melissa's ancient face hardened. "Love me?" She spoke the word as though it burned her mouth. "You let me risk my life for you, you offered me up to extinction. And why? Not for love of me but for love of others. I nearly died, and you wept that I could not face death."

"Thousands upon thousands of others have begged me that they might endanger their lives for me. I have refused them all, for their spirits were not strong to endure. But when you too begged, I allowed it, for I thought you loved me; I trusted you. And you betrayed me rather than give what you had freely offered and I had never asked."

"And for that, for *that* you chained my spirit here all these many years and forced me to tend this well. I lost everything; and you see what I have become."

"Melissa" cried Adrasteia in pain, "come back. This may be your last chance. Take my hand and become again as you were." Silence. "Melissa, my child, I pray you; do you not remember that it was you who sought out this place because you could not look into my eyes after your treachery? Or that I opened this well that you might drink, and still in a guise be my handmaiden? Your exile is over now, Melissa. Are you not afraid that if you stay in this accursed place not under my protection the Queen of Darkness will come for you?"

Melissa laughed, and her voice was a mockery of all joy. "Princess, once my lady, you are too late. Too late. The Queen of Darkness has already come for me." The cold deepened, and they watched Melissa's eyes turn blind and empty as though the very spark of life behind them was extinguished. And quite suddenly there descended upon them the black hosts of darkness in

bodily shape.

Maira felt herself grasped, tugged and clawed, and in seeking to defend herself, found she was separated from the princess. She tried to rejoin her, but her way was blocked by a wall of loathsome clawing creatures. Her skin was burning where they had touched her as if seared by venom. If she stopped struggling, they left her alone. She suddenly realised that the space behind her was free of them, and that she could reach the horses.

Once on horseback, and leading the princess's grey, she felt unaccountably secure, despite the writhing chaos that the valley had become. But it was only when the first of the demons screamed aloud as she stepped over it that she recalled that the horses were shod with iron, Niké's metal, in the shape of the crescent moon, and iron was death to the subjects of the Dark Queen.

Adrasteia stood in the heart of the maelstrom, her eyes closed and her breathing deliberate and even. Nine of the most terrible of the creatures stood motionless around her, waiting for the moment when her courage would waver, for they fed on fear. At the sight of Maira and the horses, they fell back, but maintained the circle unbroken around them. The princess lifted herself into the saddle and whispered into the mare's ear, so that she struck sparks from the rocks with her hoof, scattering the evil ones roaring. Then she lifted up her hand, her face lit by valiant serenity, and spoke, saying: "In the name of the most holy Niké, commander of the armed hosts of heaven, daughter of the flaming sword of Truth." She paused, for the air was torn by piercing shrieks of agony. "I summon you, my enemy, Queen of Darkness, to this place to render your account. For you have stolen from me that which is mine."

Maira was suddenly conscious that an immense hooded snake which had been curled on the ground was rising behind the princess, arching its body, prepared to strike. Unthinking, she raised her bow and sent a shaft through the menacing creature. The snake fell, but as it did so, it turned to look at Maira, its eyes filled with unmistakeable satisfaction. Maira remembered the second command of the princess, and with a cry of sorrow, broke the bow in her hands and flung the pieces to the ground.

The air had that instant become lighter, fresher, almost fragrant. There were none of the dreadful creatures to be seen, but only a maiden riding upon a coal-black stallion. Maira looked at the maiden wonderingly: "Oh, but she is beautiful," she thought." How my heart yearns after her." The rider of the stallion glanced toward Maira, and there was that in her eyes which answered her yearning. But Maira gazing upon them, felt her heart die within her, for they were the eyes of the snake.

"Well, my pretty, so we meet again," the Queen of Darkness, for it was she, addressed Adrasteia, "but this time I shall be the victor. See, your handmaiden has drawn my blood," she lifted up her head to show a small scratch on her neck, "and I demand the full price." She stretched forth her hand in a triumphant gesture. "You!" Her voice echoed round the mountains, growing louder and more piercing until Maira was compelled to bend her head and cover her ears. When she looked up, she was alone in the valley. Or almost alone.

Melissa lay crumpled by the well; Maira, remembering her last sight of her, was sure she must be dead, but crouched beside her and took her hand.

"Melissa, forgive me, for I have been angry with you and have despised you, but have not I, in my thoughtlessness, broke my faith and destroyed my mistress?" Her tears of sorrow and compassion fell on Melissa's face, and as they fell, her eyes opened and they were as the eyes of a child. She looked upon Maira and said: "Where is my mistress?" Maira was silent, thinking of Melissa's new mistress and all but regretting her compassion. Melissa stood up. "Where is my mistress Adrasteia?" she asked, and as she spoke, her features were transfigured, and she took on all her legendary beauty. Maira stepped up to her and took her hands. "You are too late, Melissa," she said softly. "The Queen of Darkness has come for her." Melissa looked at Maira with dawning awareness and distress. Then she picked up the pitcher from beneath the ancient leafless tree. "Draw some water for me," she said,

SOCIAL CRITICISM

King of the Castle
Cai Eaton (The Bodley Head, £5·00)

This is not a comforting book. It begins with a lengthy analysis of the kind of societies which are being created in the profane world today. Societies which have not the smallest connection with the Divine and which replace religion with a worldly totalitarianism which seeks to control each citizen body and soul; and which is busily turning the stubbornly independent peasant of yesterday into the landless, dispossessed and media-brainwashed state-serf of tomorrow.

It is less comforting because the author knows that we are approaching the end of an historical cycle and that until it is over, there can be no chance of recovery. In this context, it is interesting to not that the author's previous book, *The Richest Vein*, written some years ago, although not written from a Christian standpoint, recommended a revived Roman Catholicism as the only hope for the west. This book makes no such suggestion, presumably because in the last few decades – particularly since the notorious Vatican II – the decadence of that church has accelerated beyond all possible expectation. It is as if a damburst let loose a pent-up flood of sentimental modernism, and the tiny remnant of metaphysical Truth, once so fiercely guarded, became drowned overnight in a wash of tendentious, sociolatrous "evolutionist" neo-protestantism.

The only recommendation now is a kind of hopeless heroism, strengthened by the knowledge that this world was, after all, never anything more than a transient testing-ground for the soul. Yet it is not a gloomy book, but one whose exposure of modern errors is often very witty as well as wise. To take but one example:

> "...a child may reasonably wonder why a grown-up who can afford to buy ice-cream or chocolate every day of his (sic) life does not do so, just as we are puzzled that the ancients never developed effective techniques for the exploitation of the earth's riches. Grown-ups, however, have a different order of priorities. This childish aspect of modernism is nothing if not naive. It takes for granted that if all we want is ice-cream or its equivalents, then this is all that people ever wanted. They did not know how to produce it quickly, hygienically and in quantity. We do. They were not clever enough to invent motor cars and aeroplanes. We are."

HEALING

The Practical Encyclopædia of Natural Healing
Mark Bricklin (Rodale Press, £9·50)
The Art of Aromatherapy
Robert Tisserand (C.W.Daniel Co. Ltd., £6·00

Strictly speaking, healing is a priestess's art; yet it is good for every head of a household to know a little of it, since her authority is a "reflection" of that of a

contd. over

handing it to Maira, "I do not choose to live without her again." Maira brought the water and Melissa lifted the pitcher to her lips.

"No, my foolish child, do not drink." Adrasteia was standing beside them again. Her face was pale and bore the signs of recent pain, but she was smiling. "Come, do you suppose that the Queen of Darkness has the power to destroy me while I live in the hearts of my children? Just as I cannot destroy her while she holds captive the hearts of her servants."

"Then what was it she wanted?" asked Maira.

"Do not ask." answered the princess, taking their hands in hers."Only love me. And come home."

SYMBOLISM
The Heart and the Moon-Axe

IN SEEKING to understand anatomical symbols, such as the heart, it is important to realise that they refer to Realities far beyond the physical plane. It has been suggested, for example, that the cave (discussed last issue) is a symbol of the womb. Now in a certain limited sense this is true; and in the same sense it is quite as true that the womb is a "symbol" of the cave. But it is far truer to say that they are both equally symbols of a transcendant Reality which lies far beyond either of them; and truest of all to say that they each uniquely represent a subtly different aspect of that Reality, and that only that particular symbol can express the exact nuance which it embodies.

For the whole point about symbols is that they refer to Realities which cannot be expounded in words. They are not simply poetic devices, but precise instruments of knowledge. The meaning of a symbol can only be comprehended by a direct act of intellection through contemplation; and the verbal exposition of a symbol can never be more than a "support" to that contemplation, and never a substitute for the symbol itself.

Nevertheless, the "support" is necessary in order to give the correct direction to the contemplation. For, being an objective instrument of knowledge, there can be no more value in a "personal interpretation" of symbols than in a personal mathematics.

Both the heart and the moon-axe are connected with Easter. The Labrys was taken from our Lady at the first gate of Hell, and when Her body was hung upon the pillar of the world, "above Her head they hung the great Moon-Axe, in symbol of the greatness of the deed." (*Mythos* V,19). A heart pierced by a sword, or by seven swords (representing the seven gates of Hell) is a familiar symbol of our Lady's passion.

The heart is nowadays the more familiar of the two symbols, but in matriarchal times the moon-axe (or labrys) was equally widespread. It was the emblem of the divine authority of the priestess-queen in the Cretan Empire. It was widely used among the Amazons and the matriarchal Lydians, Lycians and Etruscans, and in pre-patriarchal Rome. It is painted on the temple-walls of the recently-excavated 10,000 year old matriarchal city of Catal Huyuk in Turkey, and carved into the sacred stones of pre-Celtic Stonehenge.

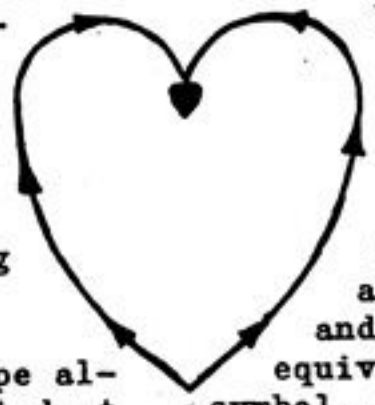
The heart, despite its apparent simplicity, is an extremely complex symbol. As the centre of the human microcosm, it is analogous to the sun, the centre of the "cosmos",

Reviews

priestess on a lesser scale; and this reflection traditionally includes not only the ministries of ritual, teaching and discipline, but also that of healing.

The first of these books is one of a growing number of home reference works which give a guide to the treatment of various ills by natural methods, such as herbs, exercises and the adjustment of diet. Such methods are often as effective (sometimes more so), and certainly safer than the artificial, drug-oriented practices of modern medicine. The second book deals with a more specialised area, yet one of great interest, since it functions primarily upon the subtle body, affecting the physical largely indirectly. Its basis is the use of fragrant essential oils — and as every magician knows each fragrance has a vital correspondence with planetary and other cosmic principles. This approach recognises the wholeness of nature, both physical and superphysical. It recognises also that there can be no true healing of the body without a healing of the soul. Which is why healing is a priestess's art.

and therefore, in its highest aspect, a symbol of pure Spirit, Light and Intellect. At the same time it is also the centre of divine Love within the human microcosm (hence the traditional association of the heart with love), thus combining the Mother-qualities with the Daughter-qualities. This dual nature of the heart is expressed in the stylised form traditionally used to represent it (see diagram), which takes the form of a double-spiral movement, the left hand spiral turning sunwise (clockwise) and the right hand spiral turning moonwise (anti-clockwise). Thus the solar Mother-nature and the lunar Daughter-nature are united in one symbol. It may thus be seen that the riving of the heart by the sword symbolises the final rupture of Daughter from Mother. The last thread joining the separated pair is broken, and – since the Mother is the very essence of being – the Daughter plunges into extinction or non-being; not merely the physical symbol of death which we experience at the end of earthly life, but Death itself – complete spiritual death, which no other being in the universe has ever undergone.



The double-curve of the heart shape also shows the Mother and Daughter united at the point of origin, their progressive separation, and finally their *heuresis* or reunion at the central cavity of the heart, which is also the centre of the universe (see "The Cave", last issue). From another point of view, they may be seen as emerging from the central cavity (which, as we saw in "The Cave", is analogous to the Cave of the Nativity) and descending until they meet at the "lowest point". In each case, the movement of the Mother is only apparent, since She is always present at the Centre, and at all other places (to object that Her Presence was not in the lower world until Inanna brought it there is to forget that the time-sequence itself is only apparent, since in reality these Events take place outside time, and that if there had ever been a place where She was not, that place would have ceased to exist).

Viewed in human terms, the heart represents the two parts of maid: the lunar soul (psyche) and the solar Spirit, which converge in "the innermost Temple of the heart" (see "The Cave"). The Spirit in maid is the true Self – the perfect reflection of an unique facet of the Divine Spirit; while the soul, insofar as she is fallen, represents the false self, the "selfish" egoity which desires to preserve its separateness from God. Here again, there must be a death on the "lunar" side – the death of the false self – before the final *heuresis* can take place. For if a maid would find her Self, she must first lose her self.

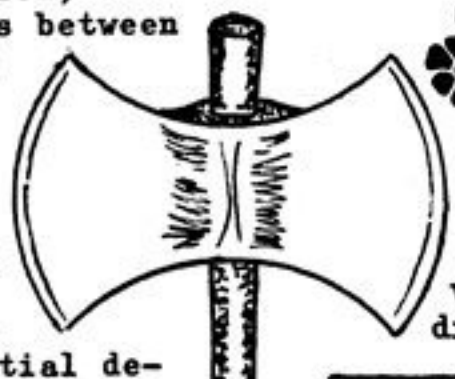
The labrys also is a dual figure, but being lunar and psychic rather than solar and Spiritual, its duality operates on a lower level than that of the heart. More precisely, it operates on the level of manifestation, rather than on that of the Principle whence all manifestation proceeds and whereto it must return. The two moon-blades, one crescent (waxing) and the other decrescent (waning), correspond respectively to all the oppositions and complementarities which are the necessary condition of manifest existence: life and death, summer and winter, pleasure and pain, activity and rest, day and night, etc. The labrys is strictly equivalent to the far-eastern yin-yang symbol, itself a device of matriarchal origin.

Yet the crucial point of the labrys is not the axe-head, but the central haft which passes through it. This haft represents the world-axis which passes through the centre of the cosmos, and upon which maid, the "central" being on her own plane of existence, takes her station (provided she is true to her own nature or themis). This is made abundantly clear by the fact that in the *Mythos* the Axe is hung upon the pillar of Hell, which is the lower section of the world-axis (see "The Cave" etc.). In iconographic depictions, the axe-haft is always shown parallel to the pillar.

The haft, therefore, represents maid, or psyche (soul) as the mediatrix between earth and Heaven and between all the dualities of manifest existence. It also represents Inanna as perfect Maid and perfect Mediatrix; the Priestess and Princess of the world, Who has said: "I am between the ripple and the water; I am between the dancer and the dance; I am between the

breathing and the breath; between the lightest word of greeting and the thought from which it flows."*

The upper part of the haft, above the blades, represents the transcendent "shaft of sunlight": the permanent Essences or Divine Ideas which are manifested through the impermanent and dualistic "play" of matter. This shaft of solar, essential light, descending from above is represented only by a short section of the haft, indicating its "point of descent". This is because the moon-axe represents the cosmos seen from "below" – that is from a human and psychic rather than a transcendent and Spiritual point of view. Nevertheless, it is a vital element in the symbolism, for psyche in a higher sense mediates between the transient flux of matter itself and the eternal Essence which it imperfectly expresses. At the same time, being on the Axis, she is a continuation of the Essential light, just as the lower portion of the haft is a continuation of the upper, while the blades represent a non-Essential development at one particular level of existence (the material in this case), branching off the haft at one particular point. That is why psyche alone (whether Inanna as perfect Soul, or maid as Her regent) can redeem material creation.



The Axis descends through every level of being, both above and below the material as we know it, and countless "worlds", both super-physical and sub-physical, branch off it at the different planes. The labrys, however, simply gives us a concise picture of our own particular level of being, its situation in psychic and Spiritual "space", and our place within it.

From a slightly different perspective, we may take the parallel symbols of the heart and the labrys as symbols of the contemplative life and the active life respectively. The heart represents the mystical *heuresis* , the return of the soul to the Mother. The labrys is an image of themis

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* From *The Teachings of the Daughter*
Available through the Literature Circle.

THE COMING SEASON 2

Rosary Day

This day celebrates the institution of the Rosary by our Lady. The Rosary is the perfect devotion, engaging the body in prayer, the mind and imagination in meditation, the spirit in contemplation, and attuning our whole being to the rhythm of the cosmic Mysteries. Everyone should say a Rosary on this day (see Catechism, Appendix 2 for full instructions). Those who normally say a daily Rosary make the full Rosary of fifteen decades. A single rose may be placed in the shrine or before an image of the Goddess.

Anthea's Day

Anthea is the Genia of fruits, flowers and blossom. Her title is Our Lady of the Flowers. It is the custom on her day to gather wild flowers and blossom to make displays in her honour.

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life, with maid acting in accordance with her true nature as mediatrix and princess regent of the world. It is for this reason that the labrys was the emblem of the divine authority of the royal house of Crete and other matriarchal states; for a princess is supremely a mediatrix, and rules not according to her own wishes, but wholly in obedience to the law of themis. This is equally true of every earthly mistress, whether mother, wife or ranya. The labrys is thus a symbol of harmony, obedience and right relations. As such, it is the emblem not only of the life of the Madrian-matriarchal nations of the old world, but also of the Madrian way of life in every themis household, and among all who live according to the law of Heaven. Yet this active life can never be separated from the heart-principle; for just as Inanna's sacrifice makes all existence possible, so it is the contemplative essence within the active life (the ritual symbolism of the crafts, etc.) which provides its sole meaning and justification and makes it a work fit not merely for a living machine, but for maid, the mediatrix.

Tales From Eternity

MODERN SOCIETY is a society dominated by fiction. In every town and village there are public libraries stacked with novels, biographies, histories ("true life" stories) usually far outnumbering the volumes of practical information and aids to academic study or the pursuit of a craft. The vast majority of homes have as their focus not the traditional hearth-fire, but the television screen which nightly recounts dozens of different stories, whether fiction or fictionalised fact (or fiction presented as fact). Among those who read one finds not the few well-worn, well-beloved volumes, companions from childhood and shapers of the soul, but an endless succession of expendable and eminently forgettable paperbacks. We must add to these the millions of story-magazines and comics sold weekly. And we are told that much more fiction is actually being written than even the vast market can absorb. So what is fiction? What purpose does it serve? And has it any right to exist?

Modern fiction consists almost wholly of the expression and evocation of emotion through narrative. One is intended to sympathise, to "feel with" the invented characters. This preoccupation with emotion is the natural consequence of a society devoted to the passive or passionate life — that is, a life which, having no governing principles, is based merely upon the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Normal human societies recognise two kinds of life: the active life, which leads to God through right conduct and the "path" of a craft and of the rituals of daily life; and the contemplative life which leads to Her through the rigorous "direct path". The passive life is not a path at all, merely an aimless wandering in search of pleasurable sensations (success, money, food, sensual gratification, fame, etc.). Fiction of the modern sort is a perfect reflection of the passive life, providing an endless stream of mere sensations unconnected to any transcending principle.

The story can nevertheless be an authentic spiritual experience. We find prototypes for the true story in the sacred writings themselves. The *Creation* and *Mythos* are cast in the form of stories, and stories are used frequently as illustrations in the *Teachings* With these there is no doubt — the stories are not for pleasure merely, nor intended to rouse the emotions for their own sake, but are directly symbolic of Reality. And this is always so with the true story. It is not entertainment, although it entertains, but is rhetoric in the true sense of the word — the effective expression of Truth. The simplest true story is always a challenge, for we are asked not merely to appreciate it, but to understand it — to see not only its outward incidents, but its inner depths of meaning. The true story comes not from the merely human level, but is inspired from above; it is an imitation of the divine essences of things, and not, as in modern fiction, of their outward accidents (whether physical or psychological). The true story is literally a tale from Eternity.

The true story survives among us even in the very heart of decadence, in the form of

the so-called folk or fairy tale, considered fit only for children. These are the traditional stories of all peoples who have kept alive, verbally and through repetition, the forms in which esoteric metaphysical knowledge is enshrined after the understanding of it has been lost. Many have become deformed, degenerate and fragmented over the centuries, and the patriarchal overlay is in many cases particularly disfiguring; but the pure light of symbolic truth still shines through them and illumines their inner depth for those who have eyes to see. This gives the tale a simple clarity, a logic of its own, which is often lost in "original" stories with fairytale motifs such as have proliferated since the seventeenth century, and for obvious reasons lack a metaphysical/symbolic foundation.

The fairytale opening, "Once upon a time", sets the scene: we are out of mundane history and mundane space, in a realm beyond that of everyday experience. We are in *illo tempore* "that time", the primordial time of which it can be said that human actions were symbolic of Eternal truths and the spiritual quest was the daily task — when maid, true to her essential nature, occupied her true "central" position.

The reality of our state upon this earth, separated from the Spirit, Source of all life and joy, and seeking reunion with Her, is the most essential of the symbolic themes of the fairy tale. Every prince seeking the princess, every child seeking her mother, every questing hero seeking the grail, the golden apples, the singing bough or the water of life — all ancient symbols of the Goddess — is the soul seeking Her.

Often the central character is not the only one to set out on a quest, but is one of three, the youngest and silliest. This "silliness" is a purity of heart and a humility ("the wisdom of spirit is folly to the world") which listens to advice from old peasant women and talking animals. And the supernatural aid which rewards this humility leads to success in the quest. Those souls not open to Spirit can achieve only on the human level, where they achieve at all. More often they are deceived by a pleasant but maleficent stranger (the illusions of the world) or lured into a wayside inn where they are pauperised or even killed; while the despised youngest, with supernatural aid, becomes the highest in the land. Often it is simplicity, humility and obedience which prompt the soul to the other virtues: courage, generosity (freeing trapped animals, sharing scanty food with strangers), wisdom (correctly solving riddles, performing impossible feats — helped or instructed by Spirit). For it is only through Spirit that Spirit is attained.

A second theme is the transformation. While the quest can be seen as the activity of the soul, the transformation is the activity of the Spirit. The soul, in this case, has taken on the aspect of some creature, bird, bear or lion, or more often a loathsome creature, a snake, dragon or toad, or an old ugly person. This enchantment represents the soul's fallen state, and can only be broken by Spirit. Here too, the Spirit is usually female, the fallen soul male: The Frog Prince, Beauty and the Beast, The Black Bull of Norroway, Snow White and Rose Red, The Bride and the Lindorm etc. This last story (illustrated here) is of particular interest because the bride (Spirit) breaks the enchantment not by the usual kiss, symbol of love and union, but by herself taking on a similar state to that of the Lindorm. He is wearing seven snake skins; she puts on seven dresses. The bride bargains with the Lindorm that she will take off her dress if he will shed his skin. This is done seven times until the Lindorm's beautiful inner form is revealed. The number seven is symbolically perfect, for the soul's ascent is

through the seven spheres of heaven, while the Spirit descends through the seven gates of Hell, divesting Herself at every stage.

The symbolism of fairy tales, as will have become apparent, is a vast subject. Many themes and motifs of spiritual significance have not been touched upon here. Every tale demands its own exposition. But more than that, it demands to be listened to (not once, for its novel-ty value, but many times) and to be understood.

Chrysothemis

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